LIAUG Light house

The Long Island ATARI Users Group

May 1991
Volume 7 No 5

Long Island Atari User Group

7

Happy Anniversary

Long Island Atari User Group

P.O. Box 92
Islip, NY 11751
BBS Phone # (516) ~~221-8462~~ 234-4943

Member of NEAR-US

Member of the User Group Affiliation Program
AUA
The Atari Users Association
UGAP

The LIAUG Lighthouse

May 1991

LIAUG

The Long Island Atari User Group and its newsletter, The LIAUG Lighthouse, are not affiliated with Atari Corporation or its affiliated companies other than being a recognized official group. All references to Atari and Atari related products are the trademark of the associated companies.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of LIAUG but rather of the individual authors. LIAUG cannot be held responsible for errors of any kind appearing in this publication.

Any material published in this newsletter may be freely copied and reprinted, provided that the individual authors and LIAUG are given due credit, unless otherwise marked or copyrighted.

LIAUG is a non-profit organization. We will not tolerate any references to piracy either implied or direct or the use of home computers for illegal activities.

ADVERTISING RATES

Business Card	$ 5.00
1/4 Page	10.00
1/2 Page	20.00
Full Page	30.00

Rates are per issue - camera ready copy only Consecutive ads placed at the same time receive a 10% discount per issue with a 30% maximum. Send ads to our regular mailing address

Directions to the library: *From the Long Island Expressway:* Take exit 58 North (Old Nichols Road), continue north for approximately two miles and make a left (west) turn onto Smithtown Blvd. Continue west for 1 1/2 miles to the Nesconset Plaza on the right hand side of the road. The library is located in the west end of the plaza.

From The Northern State Parkway: Take the Northern to the end where it continues east as Veterans Memorial/Nesconset Highway (routes 347/454). Go east approximately two miles and take the left fork (347). Continue for another three miles to Terry Road. Make a right turn onto Terry Road and take the left fork (approximately 3/4 mile) onto Smithtown Blvd. The library will be in the Nesconset Plaza on the left hand side approximately one mile from the fork. Meetings are open to all those interested at no charge. The meetings begin at 12:00 p.m. in the library 's community room and end at 4:00 p.m.

Current LIAUG Officers

President	John I. Aalto, Jr
Secretary	Joy Sanderson
Treasurer	Randy Constan
Librarian 8 bit	George Leek
Librarian 16 bit	Steven Stubbs
BBS Sysop	Patrick J. Mulvey
Club Correspondent	Terrence Madden
Int'l Correspondent	Horst DeWitz
Newsletter Editor	Harvey Schoen
8 Bit Program Manager	Pat Mulvey
16 Bit Program Manager	Terrence Madden

Club Meetings

The Long Island Atari User Group Meets once a month at the Nesconset branch of the Smithtown Library. Membership dues are $20 per year and entitles you to receive the newsletter.

The newsletter is currently being produced on a Mega2 with 4mbytes memory and a 20mbyte hard drive. Software is Timeworks Desktop Publisher and printer is HP Deskjet Plus.

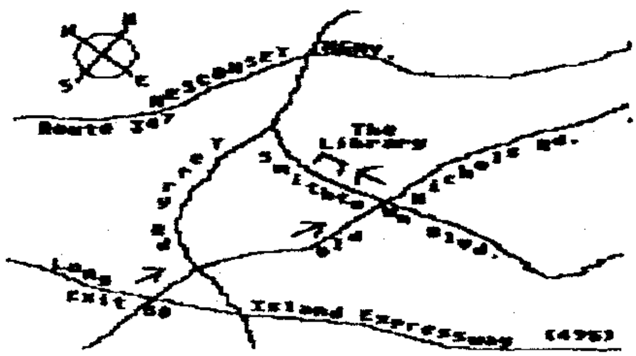
If you have any questions or comments about The Lighthouse or LIAUG, please write to our mailing address or post on our BBS.

Our address is:

LIAUG
P.O. Box 92 Islip NY 11751

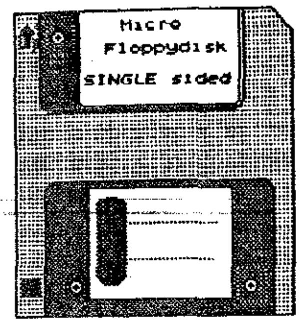
Our BBS number is: (516) ~~221-8462~~ 234-4943

If no answer call: (516) 221-2964 and leave a message.



An Oldie But A Goodie

By Terry Quinn



WHAT IT IS

DLII is an integrated hard disk tester (similar to CHK.TTP) and reorganizer with a full GEM interface. It will test for and correct several types of hard disk errors including but not limited to defective FAT tables, isolated allocated clusters, and other logical problems. The reorganization function will unfragment files resulting in faster access.

WHAT IT DOES

DLII operates in two stages. First, your disk is checked for a variety of logical errors and you will be given the opportunity to fix them within the program. This is essential since the succeeding step (reorganizing) can totally trash a *hard disk if it is run on a hard drive with some types of* logical errors. There are certain types of errors which this program will not correct for (bad sectors for example) so you will still need to use the appropriate utilities provided with your hard drive to solve these types of problems. After getting a clean bill of health from the diagnostic part of this program, the reorganizer is run. This program will move around the files beginning at the start of a partition so that all related files are contiguous and can be read with a single read/seek operation. After the program is finished, it forces a reboot so that TOS will recognize the newly reorganized disk.

PD_Q RATING • • •

""""""""""""""""""""

DOCUMENTATION Sparse but adequate



PD_Q COMMENTS Although an older program, this one deserves a second look if you have installed TOS 1.4 in your machine.

First, the user interface is very good making it an easy program to use. Second, it is apparently the only program this reviewer has seen which will preserve existing bad sector data on your drive. If you have an Adaptec or other hard *drive controller which does not support SCSI level sector* reassignment (to hide bad sectors), this is the one for you since the program will not damage your files by attempting to write them over bad sectors. Oddly enough, even commercial programs sold for this purpose tend to erase bad sector data from the FAT. Since this program moves files to the beginning of a partition, it is not terribly satisfactory for TOS 1.0 due to the slow FAT lookup routine but since TOS 1.4 has fixed this particular problem, this should work extremely well for such machines. As to the larger question "why reorganize?", doing so can speed up hard drive operations to an amazing degree. Try it. For most of us, thedifference is well worth the effort.

Program Name : DLII

Filename : DLII_024.ARC

Library Area : 2

Program Number : 3434 (& 3559)

File Size : 79380

Program Type : Hard Drive Organizer

Author : Simon Poole

Version Reviewed: 0.24

File Type : Freeware

Is There a Tactician in You?

Continued from April 1991

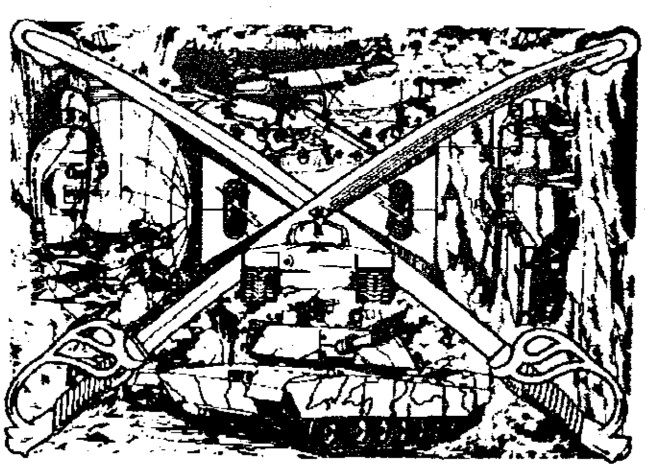
Wargames on the Ground

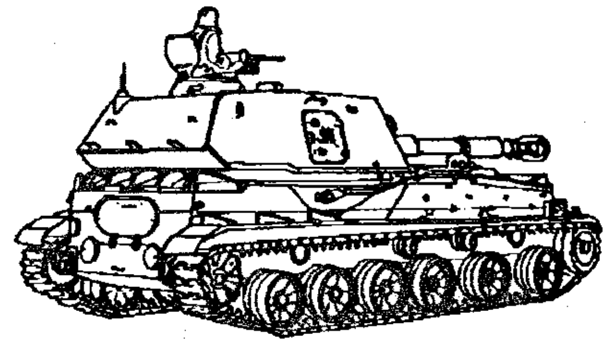
Tim Feinstra (GRASS)

Conflict in Vietnam offers scenarios from the French defeats in 1954 to the American withdrawal in 1972, also with many variants for each of the historical situations. The units here are usually regiments or battalions, and include armor, air cavalry and armored calvary.

I have not played Decision in the Desert, so I won't guess at it, but I assume it includes the same type of scenarios and variants of the other two games. These games play in real time, meaning that they do not have turns and do not stop for you to issue orders to your units. Orders are issued while the action is underway, much the same as in real life, though the games do 'pause' a bit if you give orders quickly to a lot of units. The action can be paused to scan the map if you wish, which is useful in some of the large maps that cover more than one screen. Play is only stopped during orders for a two-player game so one player may issue orders while the other player leaves the room.

Orders, given with the joystick, set the units to four possible states — attack, move, defend and reserve. Objectives for attack and move are set by moving the cursor to the desired area and pressing the fire button. While line of sight is not a factor here, supply is, and units without supply lines quickly use up their supply and will only defend their position. Reserves come into the game from the friendly side of the map and must be moved to the area you want them. You may play either side in these games, and you may also play with limited intelligence (enemy units will only be seen when in contact with your forces). Depending on the scenario, these games may take many hours to complete, so there is a save game function.





2S3 (1973) SP 152MM

These are good, involved simulations, yet they are easy to learn and play. While Conflict in Vietnam is not a game I play often, (I never did like that war), I really enjoy Crusade in Europe and look forward to the day I get Decision in the Desert.

I almost forgot a forth game here — NATO COMMANDER, fought in Europe during WWIII. Forces can be division or regiment size, whichever you choose and includes units from many of the NATO countries involved in the defense of Europe from the Warsaw Pact forces to the east. A nice touch here are chemical and nuclear weapons, but you can use nukes only with the approval of the President. He usually doesn't see things as bad as you do, so he says no a lot. Chemical weapons have side effects too, but I will leave that for you to find out. The Air forces are the ace-in-the-hole for the badly outnumbered NATO forces and must be used to their fullest potential to stop the invading "Red forces."

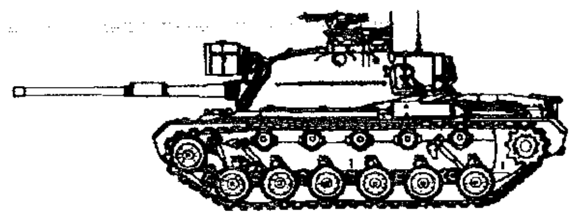
Avalon Hill has a good pair of games in GUDERIAN and GULF STRIKE. Guderian is the German drive to capture the city of Smolensk in 1941 played in 12 turns, each representing two days. The units are divisions divided into three regiments, and the stacking limit allows only three units to occupy each hex. With the joystick, move the units, or an entire stack, to the desired location. If they come into contact with the enemy, you will be prompted to assign a target hex for combat. One thing I do not like about this game is the inability to use mass attacks, as each enemy unit may only be attacked once each turn. There is a railroad feature, and as the Germans you must cut rail lines to stop Russian units from using them to get to the hot spots quickly. Other features are leaders for the Russians, random Russian units to simulate the untried state of the Russian army at the start of the war and the usual need to keep your units in a well-supplied state.

Gulf Strike, though still a simple game to play, includes land, air and naval forces during a Soviet attack into the Persian Gulf area. This game is a little out of date, for in it Iran is a U.S. ally, and we all know what they did a few years ago. Still, this game is a pleasure to play, because of the scope of forces involved. Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Soviet border are on a map that covers several screens. As well as forces from the above mentioned countries, British, French and U.S. forces ply for control of the gulf area and its oil production. Land forces are state-of-the-art armor and armored infantry, while the air units include groups of most every type of aircraft that would have been in use there just a few years ago.

I like the naval forces, since the U.S. has 2 aircraft carriers in the area as well as a battleship and some submarines. The Brits and French have subs and minesweepers. The Russian naval forces include some cruisers, a helocarrier and subs. Game play is similar to Guderian, using a joystick to issue orders and each turn is two days. Like NATO Commander, it is the Air Force which must balance the power on land, as the Soviets have an advantage of position and numbers, but their naval forces will be left wanting against the big U.S. carriers (my favorite part). For a close look at how a modern war might develop, this is the game to play, and with such large force to command, two or three players could divide up one side and each control a certain aspect (land or air) or just certain countries' forces. This could show how different countries must work together against a common foe. The instructions are very good and give a lot of information about the forces and equipment used in the game.

Two more real time games from SSI are COMBAT LEADER and BATTALION COMMANDER. These use both joystick and keyboard — the joystick to move the cursor and the





keyboard for orders. Combat Leader puts infantry squads and tank platoons at your command simulating tactical combat from WWII through the 1980's and has the weapon ratings for England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, the Soviet Union and the United States during WWII and China, England, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, the Soviet Union and the U.S. in more modern times.

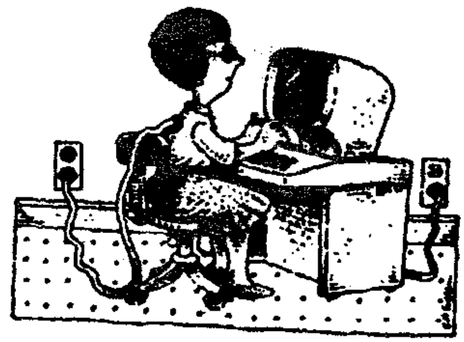
Battalion Commander gives you an entire battalion of modern fighting units of company and platoon size. Weapons for the Soviet Union, China and the U.S. are included. You may command at the company level or command a single company at platoon level, with the computer handling the rest for you. This is a good game to get the feel for the chain of command involved in a battalion.

Both games allow the creation of your own scenarios, but are only solitaire. They play quickly and can be completed in one to four hours depending on the size and type of the battle. You may choose between meeting engagements involving forces of about equal size or to attack or defend an objective. They are very good games considering their age — already four or five years old — and make very good introductions to some of the more advanced games we'll get to later.

I'm running out of room before I run out of games, so I'll just mention a few more. LEGIONNAIRE, from Avalon Hill, is a realtime game of the Roman Legions against the barbarian hordes in the days of Caesar. Played with a joystick, it can be completed in an hour or two. PARIS IN DANGER, also from Avalon Hill is a two-player-only game of Napoleon's campaign in France in 1814. Played on a map of France, units are corps of 10,000 to 20,000 men which can be broken down to divisions for combat, thus this one plays both strategic and a high level tactical.

Well now that I have rekindled my interest in some of these games, I think I'll take my leave of you and go into battle. Until next month, good hunting, and we'll see you after the battle.

THE SAD, SAD WORLD OF PC CLONES



Buying Your ST Was the Best Thing You've Done!

by J. Andrzej Wrotniak

(Reprinted from the Jan/Feb 1991 issue of Current Notes. Atari user groups listed in Current Notes may reprint this article in their club newsletters provided Current Notes and J. Andrzej Wrotniak are cited.)

Approaching me some months ago with an offer to join his firm, my new boss did not start from promises of money, fame, women or such. "Of course, we will buy you an Atari computer of your choice," he said instead. I could not refuse the offer. I am in.

My job is solving problems, or inventing ways to solve them. This involves programming: a solution should be checked out. Then the other guys take my solution and put it where they need it.

These other guys work in a relatively new language called C++. Their lives would be much easier if I could also write my stuff in C++. There is no C++ compiler on the Atari ST. So I went to my boss and said "You know, I am a really nice guy and you can get me a PC clone instead of an Atari ST." Was this man happy! I was about to turn compatible!

This was how I ended up with a PC clone on my desk, running its 80386 processor at 25 MHz and sporting four megabytes of memory. Wow! Who may need an old, one-megabyte Atari crawling at 8 MHz?

Well, after a couple of months of using this machine I am really happy I do not have one at home. There are many reasons for this.



First of all, after having used the graphic interface of the Atari ST or Macintosh, there is really no way back into the command line world. I never remember the exact spelling of my files or folders, and without a point-and-click approach this can become a pain.

Some people have realized this at last, so we now have some windowed user interfaces for the PC. The latest DOS 4.0 even has a graphic shell, a sort of added-on afterthought. Without bothering you with details, this shell is good enough to be used once and then forgotten about.

Wait, some might say, and what about the newest Windows 3.0 from Microsoft? Everybody in the PC world is now raving about Windows!

Windows 3—Still Not Quite There Windows 3.0 was bundled with my machine. My first impression was quite good. The program looks nice and crisp, and there are lots of widgets to play with. Being able to exit from a program without terminating it, then to do something else and instantly come back (if your model does multitasking) is a nice capability.

On the other hand, doing the simplest things under Windows (like rearranging files) is not as easy as it should be—the interface is far less straightforward, intuitive and convenient than on, say, the Atari ST, Macintosh or Amiga (let me refer to these as the "other machines.")

Microsoft went to great pains to make Windows look and feel as differently from the Macintosh as possible. Yes, we know Apple is suing everybody in sight for the Mac "look and feel" they didn't even invent. This is why I will never buy any Apple products (they are overpriced, anyway).

This attempt to look different resulted—in many cases at least—in quite clumsy procedures to do really simple things. When you run Windows, you get yourself into something called the Program Manager window. There you have sub-windows with groups of programs you may execute by double-clicking (they should have used triple-clicking here.

☞

to be safe from the possibility of being sued by Apple!). You may install new programs and new groups, but the process is not as convenient as just dragging a program file to the desktop as on the Mac (or, for that matter, in NeoDesk on the ST).

If you want to perform any file operations, you must open the Utilities sub-window in the Program Manager and run a program called File Manager. This thing is a real dog. Its window contains, at first, just the disk drive icons. Double-clicking on an icon opens the drive root directory, which will then replace the drive icons in the window (unless you set the appropriate option in one of the menus).

To delete a file, first select it and then go to the File menu to click on Delete. Much less convenient than just dragging it into the trash. Or click on Copy, and then you will have to type in the destination path. How thoughtful—just to make the withdrawal from DOS less painful for compulsive typers!

Well, you can also drag a file from a window to a window (this is less convenient than it may seem, as the windows open in a staggered overlapping pattern). One day, I crashed four times in a row trying to perform this operation. Enough is enough.

These are just examples. I have used Windows 3 for six weeks just to acquire some familiarity with this highly regarded, supposedly user-friendly system, intended to bring computers closer to the non-techies. I have discovered some obvious bugs, experienced some mysterious crashes, and often I had to refer to the manual to do the most elementary things. Well, now I am back to DOS, where things are more predictable.

Browsing through the recent issues of PC oriented magazines, I recently found four (!) third-party user interface replacements for Windows 3. The one I like most sells for $180 (and looks very much like the "other machines.") To hell with it.



GEM 3.0--A Pathetic Retreat

When Digital Research, Inc. first came out with the GEM desktop, the PC version was very much like that running on the ST. Nothing to write home about, but simple and intuitive.

Then our friends in Apple sued DRI for the Mac "look and feel." The DRI execs called their programmers and said "Do something so that our look and feel is no longer like Mac's, and do it cheap and fast!" This marked one of the most pathetic evolution (devolution?) paths in the history of software development.

The newest Version 3 of the GEM desktop for the PC is a far cry from the original. Some changes may just look funny, like moving the Desk menu from the far left to the far right (what a stroke of originality, so much different than on the Mac!), some are only irritating, and some reduce the convenience. None are for the better.

First of all, the Mac has a trash can. Let us get rid of it, adding the "Delete" entry in the File menu. Here is an example of how small changes may make using the program much less convenient. But, to strike the right balance, let us remove the "New Folder" entry from the menu, adding instead a "New Folder" icon to each window! Well, now we see something which is not really there, but the Mac does not have it!

Not enough? Let us remove all drive icons from the desktop and move them into the windows. Two windows, no less and no more; you cannot close them nor add a third one. Now when you open a drive directory, the drive icon is no longer there, covered with the directory itself, and when you have two directories open, there are no drives on the screen at all. Inconvenient? Maybe. But so much different than on the Mac!

Resizing or moving desktop windows? Who needs that? Let us have each window occupy a horizontal half of the screen; this is good enough. It may be somewhat inconvenient when you use the text mode to show directories (you can see just a few files at a glance, but lots of space to the right is being

wasted), but nobody will accuse us of looking and feeling like a Mac! And this was how GEM, having a chance to become a standard user interface in the PC world for those who do not want to learn DOS (or who just like the convenience), became a dead-end street of evolution.

DRI is now selling a very nice replacement/superset of the MS DOS, called DR DOS. Among lots of nice features it also has a graphic shell—and this is a clone of GEM v.3. Aargh!

If the DRI people knew any better, they would have approached our Dan Wilga from Gribnif Software. He could give them a lesson or two on how to make user interfaces. Or, if you insist on looking and feeling as different from the Mac as possible, then Charles Johnson's Hotwire/Maxifile combo from CodeHead Software would do nicely, thank you. Anything, but not GEM 3.

How Much Memory Does Your Machine Have?

My 4-megabyte PC runs out of memory much more often than my 1-megabyte ST. Welcome to the brain-damaged PC DOS architecture. Many programs do not know how to use the extra memory! My C++ compiler chokes on modest-size programs. The thing is smart: it would swap the memory to an from the hard disk, but when I recently added about 50 lines to a program, the compile/link time jumped from about 10 seconds to more than six minutes. Isn't that special?

If you are a programmer, you will soon become frustrated with all the limitations in memory usage. I had a field day recently watching a colleague of mine, an experienced programmer, wasting lots of his effort on these things. How do you allocate more than 64k of memory on the heap at one time? How do you work around the 64k limit for unit code, for the stack, or for a data block? We on the ST, with its civilized Motorola processor, do not even suspect these problems could exist in the last decade of the 20th century. After listening to the man's complaints for a while, I asked him an obvious question: "Why don't you get yourself a real computer?"



Well, there are many good and powerful programs in the PC world. Using them I sometimes wonder: how much programmer's time and effort has been devoted to just fighting the computer limitations instead of using its features? Let me spare you the answer.

A Program--Or a Way of Life?

There is one basic problem with the "off-the-shelf" software for the PC. Almost every program has its own standard user interface. You cannot just take a program out of the box and start using it. First, you have to memorize the function keys, keyboard commands, or the peculiarities of the program graphic interface. You do it again for almost any new program you use.

The "other machines" come with a toolbox of graphic output and user interface primitives supplied by the computer manufacturer. The programmers are strongly encouraged to use this toolbox in a uniform manner. The more programmers depart from those recommendations, the steeper the user's learning curve becomes. A program becomes a way of life, not just something to use to get things done. On the PC, writing the user interface from the ground up becomes a major investment in developing a program. Choose, randomly, ten public domain programs for the PC and ten for the Atari ST, and you will see the difference.

The tool boxes I have mentioned come with some PC graphic environment packages, like GEM or Windows. Using them would, however, seriously limit the market for a program (GEM never became really popular on the PC and Windows still has a way to go). Besides, programming for Windows is much more difficult than for GEM, and the developing tools are very, very expensive.

The Brighter Side

The only positive aspect of having a PC clone is the size of the hardware and software market. Through their heroic efforts, the PC programmers somehow managed to come up with thousands of application programs for almost any purpose. Some of these programs are mediocre—one of my

friend's reaction after having moved to a PC was: "You would not believe what pieces of junk are being sold for hundreds of dollars! Those suckers will be happy with almost anything, the stuff nobody would take for free on the ST!" But some of the other programs are excellent, and the choice is wider than for any other machine.

As a programmer, I am really frustrated we do not have two important languages, Ada and C++, on the ST. Both are very powerful and especially suitable for developing large programs. I miss them badly: were they available on the ST, I would never have had to have this ugly PC clone on my desk (not to mention all those remarks from my co-workers who know my feelings in the matter).

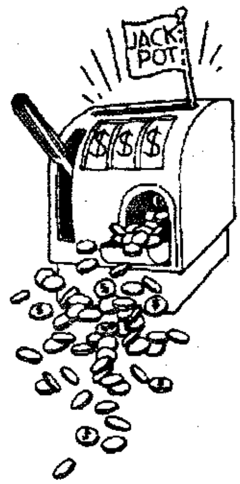
Even in the domain of more established languages, the PC and Mac have a strong edge: the implementations of C, FORTRAN, and especially Pascal are significantly more advanced there (give me Turbo Pascal 5 or Mac Pascal, please!). Well, this is the price we pay for staying in the cozy, small world of Atari.

The choice of hardware add-ons in the clone world is also better than anywhere else, and the open architecture plus the market size make the prices quite attractive—the advantage of staying with the crowd.

"Do I Need a PC Clone?"

People ask me this question almost every week, expecting a clear yes/no answer. The answer is, "It depends." If you need to run programs not available on the ST, well, get a clone and be stuck with it. This may be the case if you need a custom program to run a dentist's office or a company gas usage optimizer.





If, however, you expect your needs will be of a more mainstream nature, like word processing, spreadsheets, graphics, databases, desktop publishing and such, then going for a PC does not make much (if any) sense. The existing software on the ST covers these aspects perfectly (well, almost), and the computer is so much nicer to use. (Not to be accused of self-promotion, I will not mention that you cannot run El Cal on the PC.)

Let us also not forget the emulation capabilities of the Atari ST, which are second to none. With the Spectre GCR, PC-SPEED (or other PC emulators), we can switch easily between the environments. Now, try to do it from a PC! (Who knows, maybe the mysterious Ms. Schuetz with her Donnerwetter ST from Komputersaftenwarenprogram-mierunggesselschaft will decide to show up at the Fest? This would be something!).

Last, but not least, it seems like the Atari enthusiasts are a bunch of dedicated, knowledgeable, helpful and fun-loving computer hobbyists. I am not saying this just to make you feel good: indeed, I believe our micro-world is really exceptional in this aspect. So, if on some rainy

day, you have second thoughts about whether your choice of machine was the right one, remember the title of this article and feel lucky you are not stuck in the sad, sad world of PC clones.

[Reprinted from the WAACE AtariFest 90 program.]

eSTeem PILOT

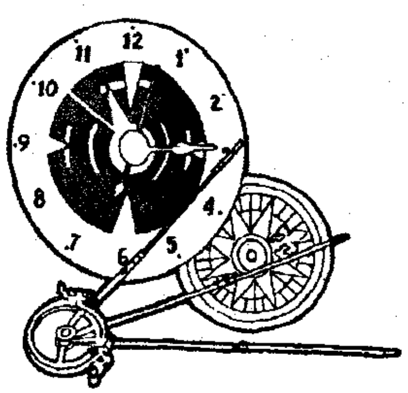
Hoover, AL (Aug 1). Today, eSTeem inc. introduced a version of the PILOT authoring language for Atari ST computers.

eSTeem PILOT is a GEM-based language and management system for creating and using a wide variety of programs for education, training and systems control.

PILOT, an acronym for Programmed Inquiry, Learning Or Teaching, is a simple, powerful and widely used language for creating tutorials, simulations, interactive laser videodisc programs, device control systems and other computer-based systems. eSTeem PILOT is an enhanced version of PILOT, fully utilizing the friendly GEM (Graphic Environment Manager) user interface and graphic capabilities of Atari ST computers. It follows the proposed 1990 IEEE revision of the PILOT language standard.

In addition to its GEM user interface, eSTeem PILOT can:

- import DEGAS and EasyDraw graphics
- draw graphics and write text
- generate music and sound effects
- read and write data files
- load, run, and chain program modules, automatically
- place and remove graphic response markers
- handle point-and-click responses to graphic buttons
- offer context-sensitive HELP dialog boxes
- control user access via passwords
- log and report usage
- control laser videodisc players and other devices





An eSTeem PILOT program—called a module—can switch between full text, full graphics, and split-screen text and graphic displays. It can present typed information and evaluate typed responses. It can load as many as two DEGAS-type pictures and eight EasyDraw or other GEM-type graphics and then display them separately or simultaneously. It can place as many as five graphic markers for labeling parts of the graphic display and detect the user's point-and-click responses on these markers.

It can also define areas of the graphic screen which become "hidden buttons" to which eSTeem PILOT can respond when the user points and clicks on them.

eSTeem PILOT can control external devices through the computer's serial port. A laser videodisc player with a computer interface can be connected to an Atari ST or Mega computer to provide a sophisticated, computer-based, interactive videodisc training system.

eSTeem PILOT is easily configurable for use in a wide variety of situations, including the home, classroom, resource or training center or office. Global defaults can be set and stored for password access, module logging, drive and path settings, title screen display, and the option to load and run a module at the time eSTeem PILOT is run.

eSTeem, inc. will begin shipping eSTeem PILOT August 15, 1990.

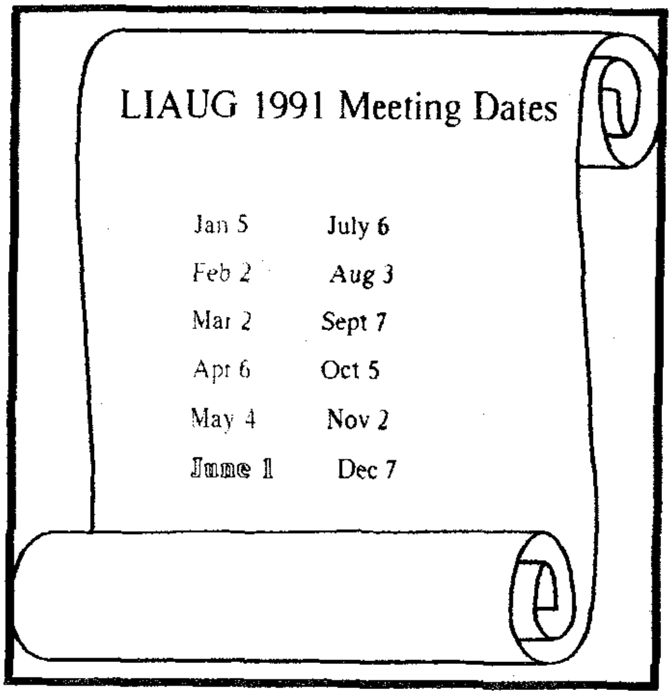
Orders and dealer inquiries should be directed to:

Computers Etc.

4647-B Highway 280

Birmingham, AL 35242

205/980-9146



ANNOUNCING

☆ **8bit Public Domain Disks** ☆

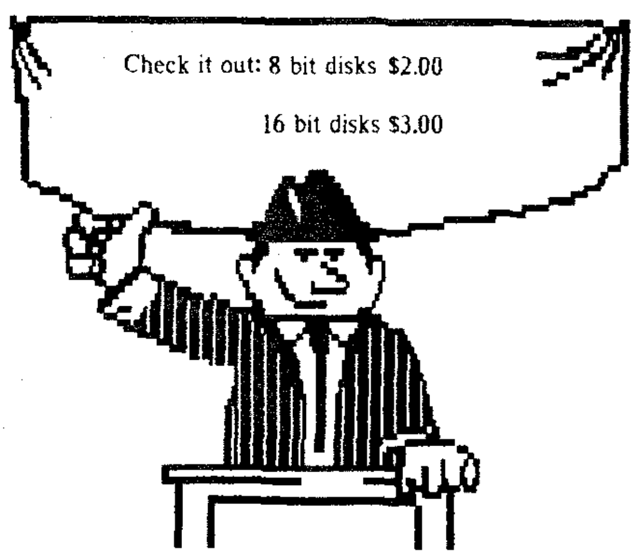
Please see our 8-bit librarian, George Leek, for the latest listing of PD disks. We are constantly adding new items to the library.

NEW

☆ **16 bit Public Domain and Shareware software** ☆

Check with the ST Librarian for new PD and Shareware programs in the club library.

Check with our 8-bit librarian for new PD disks in the club library.



From the Sysop's Desk



By Jim Harris (LIAUG)

"There is a Season...."

Now that it's Springtime, thoughts turn naturally to growth and renewal. Old things pass away, and we look forward to nicer weather. Things become new again. There's an infusion of hope and vitality everywhere you look. The only problem is, we've often become comfortable with the old ways and it's hard to change. We don't WANT to change. The old ways were perfectly OK; why rock the boat? Well, sometimes the boat gets rocked anyway.

About a week before the April meeting, I found myself talking to Pat in the Broadway Mall parking lot. "Pat, you're running yourself ragged. Why don't you let me help you with the BBS?" I offered to co-sysop the board, and help take some of the load off. He said he'd think about it, and talk to me at the meeting on Saturday.

Saturday, I ended up talking to both Pat Mulvey and John Aalto. "Why don't you take THE ENTIRE BBS, and run it from YOUR house." I was flabbergasted! **Me**? Take the **BBS**? You gotta be kidding! Pat's raised that thing from a pup! Pat's had the BBS for just about as long as I've been a MEMBER! You ARE kidding .... aren't you?

No, this is **not** a drill. Pat was actually offering to give up **his** BBS, and trust it to my (hopefully!) capable hands. At first I didn't believe it, but it began to make sense. Islip is a more central location, and it's an untimed call for most of the members. If I'm going to be doing all this work on it, I might as well have access to it. The more I thought about it, the better it sounded. Hmmm... sysop the LIAUG BBS? Yeah ... 'Jim the sysop' has a nice ring to it!

By that next weekend, I had a shiny new phone line installed, and a box of equipment in my computer room.

Adventure! The torch had been passed to a new generation!

Here was my opportunity to place my stamp on LIAUG for all time! I, in my foolish naivete, was looking forward to the challenge.

I'm sure you've heard the saying; 'no pain, no glory'. It applies to BBS sysops too. Hard disks are finicky beasts, and even with the best of care, they do not like being moved.

Pat and I re-assembled the system, only to discover that the hard drive had taken a 'soft' hit. Some of the subdirectories had been trashed, and there were holes all over the system. Two days later, I had rebuilt the system from backups and was ready to start work on the BBS itself. *C'est la vie...*

First, the bad news. Murphy's law was written on a hard drive, and if anything is going to get trashed, it's going to be the user log. Fortunately, we had recent back-ups, so the damage wasn't that great. Anybody with a user number over 80 will have to sign on again and get validated. I'll try to make this as painless as possible. Some of the message bases were clobbered as well. I found garbage in E-mail, the Meeting base (#3) and the Officer base (#6). I wasn't sure how helpful two month old E-mail would be, so I just wiped it clean. Bases three and six were re-built from backups and are two months behind.

The file areas looked OK but you can't really tell with ML files. Fair Warning! It **is possible** that the file areas might have been hit too.

IF YOU NOTICE A FILE THAT DOESN'T WORK, OR DOES STRANGE THINGS. PLEASE LET ME KNOW, SO I CAN TAKE IT DOWN!

They looked solid enough that I thought I'd take a chance with them.

Now for the good news. It looks like at least 90% of the BBS survived the crash intact. Jon Mordosky, the sysop of ACUTE in Pa. has been a BIG help. He sent me copies of files that we didn't have backed up and PD Pro utilities that I can use to make the board nicer. I was able to pick up a nearly new 20 meg Hard Drive from Steven Stubbs. That is now the main drive on the BBS. One 10 meg partition is the whole BBS;, the other 10 meg is just for download file areas.

That should be PLENTY of room (for now!). I've also copied an image of both partitions onto the old 10 meg, which is now the backup drive. Even if one of the two drives dies, we're still in good shape.

☞



Rebuilding the BBS sounded like a Golden Opportunity to exercise some creativity. I decided to totally trash the 'traditional' Pro menu, in favor of a more user-oriented one.

I set up a simple two-level menu structure, to limit the number of commands that appear on the screen at one time. When you first log on and get the command prompt, pressing a "?" displays the new menu. This menu is divided into two parts. The most popular commands are set up as one-key commands. These include:

(B) list all message **B**ases

(C) **C**all for the sysop

(G) **G**oodbye (log off the system)

(Q) **Q**uick-scan all marked message bases for new messages.

(S) the **S**uggestion Box (feedback to the sysop)

(T) change your **T**ranslation mode between ATASCII and ASCII

(=) Go to any base you can see in item "B"

(?) HELP! (display the main menu)

All the other commands are grouped into functional blocks called Club Rooms. There are five Club Rooms in all.

They are:

(F) the **F**ile room (upload/download area)

(L) the **L**IAUG meeting room (Information about LIAUG, and other meetings/groups of general interest)

(M) the **M**ail room (send or receive E-mail, F-mail, or send feedback to the sysop)

(N) the **N**ews room (This is where you'll find new information about changes that I'll be making in the BBS from time-to-time. You should visit here often! The "other BBS list" is also located here)

(U) the **U**ser's information room (This is where you can examine or change your user options, make changes to your Quick-scan list, do user searches, or look at the "last 50 callers" log)

Almost all the features of the old BBS are here, except for two; the "user statistics", which I felt was boring and useless, and the Revolution Handbook library. The Revolution Handbook is available in both the 8-bit and 16-bit file areas for downloading at your convenience.

When I set up the BBS, I wanted to satisfy two differing ideas. I want the BBS to be interesting and entertaining, and I want the user interface to be simple and uncluttered. I feel that the "club room" menu style satisfies these two wants.

Most importantly, **THIS IS YOUR BBS!** My job as sysop is to provide all of you with an environment that is stimulating, entertaining, and enjoyable. The BBS is quite literally LIAUG's front door. This is what most people see first, and the impression that they get from the BBS is often the most important. It reflects on YOU! I want your ideas!

What do you like about the BBS? What do you dislike? How could I change it to make it better, more interesting, or easier to use. Your idea could be the one that transforms our BBS into a shining star in the Atari community! But if you don't tell me, I'll never know about it.

DON'T FORGET THE SUGGESTION BOX!

More next month!

The new BBS number is 516-234-4943

Don't forget to change your terminal soft-ware automatic dialing menu.

☆ NEAR-US ☆

A.C.E. of Syracuse A.C.E. of S.
NEAR-US Contact 204 E. Patricia Lane North Syracuse NY 13212

Fred Danaway 315 451-2403

Allentown Bethlehem Easton's A.C.E. ABE's
ACEs NEAR-US Contact P.O.Box 2830 Lehigh Valley PA 18001

Helpkey II 215 868-4856 Paul Grover 215 799-3337

Atari Berks Users Group A.-B.U.G.
Atten: NEAR-US Contact Box 776C RD #1 Reading PA 19607

Snake Pit 215 779-7859 Jerry Heere 215 678-4606

Atari Bit Byter Users Club e.V. ABBUC
% Horst Dewitz 1653 Wesley Ave. N. Merrick NY 11566

Wolfgang Burger

Brooklyn Atari Society for Info & Comm. B.A.S.I.C.
% Al Petersen 97 70th St. Brooklyn NY 11209-1113

Dateline 718 833-0828 Al Petersen

Central Connecticut Computer Club C.C.C.C.
ATTN: NEAR-US CONTACT 127 Pinnacle Rd. Bristol CT 06010

Jersey Atari Computer Group J.A.C.G.
% Dave Arlington Eagle Rock Village Bld. 8 #3B Budd Lake NJ 07828

201 347-5227 David Noyes, 3 Ann Rd., Long Valley, NJ 07853-9614 201 852-3165

Lehigh Valley Atari Users Group L.V.A.U.G.
Atten: NEAR-US CONTACT P.O. Box 796 Whitehall PA 18052-0796

ACUTE 215 261-0620

M.A.C.A.M.
% Brian Stachiew 12452 Breault Pierrefonds, Quebec CANADA H8Z 1B4

Pig& Whistle 514 684-0282

North East Atari Team User Group N.E.A.T.
Atten: NEAR-US Contact P.O. Box 18150 Philadelphia PA 19116-0150

NEAT BBS 215 677-1370 Allan Zaluda 215 677-6751

Ol' Hacker's Atari User Group O.H.A.U.G.
Atten: NEAR-US Contact 3376 Ocean Harbor Dr. Oceanside NY 11572

Nest 516 221-8462 Alex Pignato

Riverhead Atari Computer Enthusiasts R.A.C.E.
% Frank Kuzloski Park St. Wading River NY 11792

Nest 516 221-8462

ST Atari Road Runners ST.A.R.R.
% Glenn Werner 950 Yale Ave Suite 123 Wallingford CT 06492

203 421-4861 Robert A. Hueffman 203 421-3864

Southcentral Pa. Atari Computer Enthusiasts S.P.A.C.E.
ATTN: NEAR-US CONTACT P.O. Box 11446 Harrisburg PA 17108-1446

Richard Deen RDEEN (GEnie) 717 238-3528 eve. 783-6401 work

Current BBS numbers

LIAUG	516-234-4943
JACG	908-298-0161
A-BUG	215-779-7859
LVAUG	215-261-0620
OL' HACKERS	516-234-4943
NEAT	215-677-1370
RACE	516-234-4943
SPACE	TBA
BIT BYTERS	516-234-4943
ABE's ACEs	215-868-4856
SAGE	814-833-4073
STARR	203-421-4861
SJACE	609-931-3014
ACES	TBA
ACOR	TBA
AUGHA	TBA
CCCC	TBA
MACAM	514-684-0282
MMNJ	TBA
NAPCO	TBA
PACE	TBA
WMASTUG	TBA
WACO	TBA
BASIC	718-833-0828

LIAUG Minutes of 02/02/91

The meeting started before the president arrived at 1:00 p.m. with a demonstration of Falcon. After the arrival of the president, the meeting came to order and John Aalto showed the various pieces of mail that had arrived.

The minutes of the previous meeting were then read and accepted.

Harvey Schoen spoke to the sysop of LIAUG's BBS, Pat Mulvey, regarding the idea of a Desk-Top Publishing area. Apparently the BBS is tight for space. A discussion on BBS message bases ensued and Pat was going to look itno the possibility of such an area.

John reminded the group that May would be the seventh anniversary of the founding of LIAUG. It was recommended that information to this effect would be published in Newsday with an advertisement to run on Tuesdays, notifying the public that an open house for those with an interest in ATARI would be held on the first Saturday in May. John Aalto and Harvey Schoen constructed the advertisement ad lib. Harvey, questioning the availability of money for refreshments, was reassured that such money would be available. John nominated himself as the food committee.

Suggestions that a Midimaze should be available brought offers of systems for its setup. Other suggestions were that the following might be available: a demonstration of Desk-top Publishing, Midi, Animation, Digizing, items for 8-bitters. A suggestion that Channel 12 should be invited was proposed and Tom Alvarez offered to check if it wll video it as a news item.

At this point we broke for lunch.

Returning, John reported on another game system called the Panther, which is a 16 bit system of the Genesis type, running at 16 Mhz.

John suggested that newsletters should be sent to members of NEAR-US who are in the Desert Storm troops in Iraq. The meeting closed with more demonstrations.

Current Notes Special Subscription Information

Please note that the subscription price has been increased. The newsstand price is now $27. Members save $4.00

Use this coupon to subscribe to Current Notes at the special rate of $23 per year. Send your check with your name and address and this coupon to:

Current Notes
122 N. Johnson Rd
Sterling, VA 22170

Long Island AUG



Some BBS's in 516 area



✓ **GEnie™** –

Amityville 789-2450

East Hampton 324-5002

Mineola 294-9170

Port Jefferson 473-5331

✓ **Compuserve(R)**–

Hicksville 932-1470

Ronkonkoma 981-0880 981-1120

The Long Island ATARI Users Group

Long Island Atari User Group

To apply for LIAUG membership fill out the following application and bring it to the next meeting, or mail it (including check or money order) to:

The Long Island ATARI User Group
P.O. Box 92
Islip, New York 11751

The current dues, which includes a subscription to our newsletter, is $20 per year. Kindly make your check payable to The Long Island Atari User Group.

First name: ______________________ Last name: ______________________

Address ______________________

City: ______________________ State: ______ Zip: ______

Phone # ______________________

Your system (please be specific):

Computer: 400 600 800 800XL 65 130 520 1040 MEGA

Memory: ______ Cassette: ______ Disk drives ______

Modem: ______ Interface: ______ Printer: ______

Other: ______________________

What languages are you familiar with? ______________________

____

In what areas would you like to learn more about your computer system? ______________________

____

For LIAUG use only: Rec'd ___/___/___ Amt: ______ Ck: ___/___/___ Yr: ___/___/___ Card Y/N ML Y/N Mail / BBS / Meet

The Long Island Atari User Group is beginning its eighth year of supporting the Atari computers. We will continue to support all the older equipment and the newest just coming from Atari. Join us on the first saturday of the month. Next meeting is June 1, 1991

The LIAUG Lighthouse
P.O. Box 92
Islip, NY 11751



Atari Bit Byter Users Club e.V.
% Horst Dewitz
1653 Wesley Ave.
N. Merrick NY 11566

First Class Mail